

# **The Florida House of Representatives**

*Representative Franklin Sands*

98<sup>th</sup> District

February 23, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up  
CC Docket No. 96-45; WC Docket 03-109**

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I am writing today to show my support for the efforts of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service and Lifeline and Link Up. The Lifeline program provides an invaluable service to low-income constituents in my district and across the country. I think it is important to look for ways to minimize fraud, waste and abuse in the program so that deserving and qualified families will still have access to this vital program, and I'm applaud the Board for doing so.

The Lifeline program is more invaluable than ever, with our nation struggling to overcome unemployment and other economic challenges. Reports both academic and anecdotal have shown that access to phone service leads to greater chances of employment, and are more likely to stay employed. And my district, and our nation's, residents should be able to access these services in the case of an emergency.

I agree unequivocally with the Board's recommendations that the Commission put together a plan for standardization on areas that would apply to all Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) that would help eliminate waste and abuse in this program. In doing so, however, I want to make sure that low-income support of the fund remains strong. I am adamant that the program remains free and accessible to those who qualify because it is such a beneficial program to my constituents.

*Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee, Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Subcommittee,  
Appropriations Committee, Rules and Calendar Committee and the Select Committee on Water Policy*

REPLY TO:

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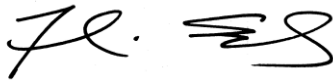
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Sergeant at Arms

Low-income support is cyclical and this should be acknowledged. As you may be aware, unemployment has been increasing in my state since 2008 and those eligible for SNAP assistance has as well. In these challenging economic times, programs such as Lifeline have a real and tangible impact on the lives of my constituents, and I believe the Commission to recognize this, too. As this recession begins to regress, the numbers of those eligible for Lifeline should as well.

I hope you will take seriously the recommendations of the Federal-State Joint Board, and understand the urgency of this pressing matter. A main concern of mine is that the Commission should not adopt policies that cap funding for low-income support or hinder competition in an already underserved market. For example, the FCC should not mandate (even minimal) monthly subscriber fees for Lifeline users, which would present an unnecessary administrative burden on both carriers and consumers. The best approach to curtailing fraud and abuse is establishment of an eligibility database. I appreciate you considering my views and concerns on an issue of utmost importance to my community and our country.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. ES", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Franklin Sands